



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Background Information

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a longstanding problem in Haiti, where the risk of violence and sexual exploitation against women and girls is exacerbated by poverty, poor security, and a lack of awareness. As observed elsewhere in post-disaster areas, Haitian women and girls displaced by the 2010 earthquake were even more susceptible to violence. According to the UN and other human rights organizations, Haitian women in the remaining camps for earthquake-displaced persons are particularly at risk, but many women and girls throughout the country remain vulnerable.

U.S. Government Strategy

Reducing GBV and empowering women are critical U.S. Government priorities for promoting Haiti's long-term economic and democratic development. Effectively addressing GBV calls for a sustained engagement to reduce vulnerability through legislative action, effective law enforcement, community outreach, increased literacy, and economic empowerment. The weakness of the Haitian justice system is a particular challenge to these goals, making it difficult for GBV victims to find redress. Fear of reprisals and the social stigma attached to being a victim of sexual violence in Haiti contribute to underreporting, and a lack of comprehensive baseline data makes strategic response planning more difficult. To tackle these challenges, the U.S. Government is working with the Government of Haiti, Haitian civil society organizations, including many women-led organizations, and the international community to address these pressing needs.

Improving Security

- **Funding preventive security measures.** The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided direct support and technical assistance to the Ministry of Women's Affairs for a campaign against rape. From 2011-2013, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives installed more than 1,700 solar lights in urban and rural sections of Port-au-Prince, Saint-Marc, and the Cap-Haïtien corridor to help deter crime.
- **Building the capacity of the Haitian National Police (HNP).** The U.S. Government provides substantial support to professionalize and expand the HNP; as of December 2014 approximately 3,300 new officers have been trained and commissioned. U.S. assistance to the HNP promotes the inclusion of women in the force. Through targeted recruiting, the 2013 HNP promotion class was ten percent women officers. In partnership with the New York City Police Department, the U.S. Government works to build the capacity of the HNP Child Protection Unit to combat gender-based and domestic violence against children. The U.S. Government supported a Brazilian-led GBV assessment visit to Haiti, as well as a 2013 study tour in Brazil for six Haitian police and judiciary officials to share best practices in countering GBV and sexual violence. U.S. police officers assigned to the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) provide mentoring to the HNP Gender Unit and work directly to support victims of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). Through the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, the U.S. Government funds the position of an SGBV expert to mentor and train the HNP's GBV unit. This advisor has extensive background in working with victims of domestic violence and abuse.
- **Protection programs.** The Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons supports law enforcement and social welfare agencies to increase their capacity to identify victims of trafficking and refer them to nongovernmental organizations that provide direct services.

Supporting Victims

- **Providing training to identify GBV cases.** USAID is training Haitian health care providers at 31 *Services de Santé de Qualité pour Haïti* (SSQH) healthcare facilities on how to identify and manage GBV cases and provide referrals to social and legal services. Since 2012, more than 177,000 people have been sensitized and surveyed on GBV, including 485 staff, more than 118,000 patients, and more than 58,500 community members living in high-risk areas.
- **Supporting legal aid in low-income and marginalized communities.** USAID provides free legal aid in partnership with local bar associations in Saint-Marc, Cite Soleil, Petionville, and Martissant. In FY 2014, nearly 962 women benefitted from the services offered in USAID-supported legal service centers in the impoverished areas of Cite Soleil and Martissant.
- **Protecting displaced women and girls.** The Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons is assisting children in involuntary domestic servitude by supporting community-based social protection networks and specialized shelter services. Programs also work with families to facilitate healthy reintegration and reduce the chances of re-trafficking. More than 1,000 children received direct assistance, including family tracing and reunification and medical, psychosocial, and educational support.

Improving Legislation

- **Improving legislation.** With support from the U.S. Government through USAID, two new laws were passed by the Senate in 2014 to combat trafficking in persons (TIP) and promote responsible parenthood. The USAID human rights program, AKSE, is now working to build needed capacity among judicial personnel, civil society organizations, and Government of Haiti officials to ensure the laws are understood and enforced country-wide. In FY 2014, the U.S. Government supported training for 89 human rights defenders on the new legislation; the training provided the skills and tools necessary to conduct advocacy campaigns in local jurisdictions for the application of anti-TIP legislation. USAID supported several training sessions, which were held jointly by the Magistrate's School and the Government of Haiti's agency for social wellness.

Creating Economic Opportunity to Address a Root Cause of GBV

- **Providing sustainable economic solutions.** In FY 2014, USAID's agriculture program trained close to 5,000 female farmers and certified 907 female master farmers, helping to increase farm yields. Additionally, more than 46 percent of the nearly 26,000 farmers enrolled in the Haiti Hope mango program are women.
- **Linking women to capital.** In FY 2014, USAID's financial services program provided \$7.6 million in microfinance to women clients. USAID also provided assistance to micro- small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in U.S. Government-targeted areas to help them improve their management skills through business development services (BDS). The number of MSMEs receiving BDS as a result of USG assistance increased by 34 percent from 485 to 650, with the percentage of women-owned business accessing the services going from 21 percent in FY 2013 to 35 percent in FY 2014 (227 women-owned businesses received BDS).

Raising Awareness and Building Capacity

- **Mass media campaign in Port-au-Prince and the department of Artibonite.** A sensitization campaign is being supported through two radio stations in the capital and the department of Artibonite. This campaign targets a population of 200,000 people who are being provided information about trafficking in persons.
- **Supporting an innovative emergency response approach to GBV.** USAID is providing technical support to a local organization in Jacmel on GBV prevention and how to prepare for and respond to GBV in emergencies.
- **Providing technical support to help promote protection issues.** USAID is supporting program planning on protection issues, including GBV; advocacy efforts through the central and local levels of government; and public awareness of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination.